

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

P.O. Box 2604
Washington, D.C. 20013

MHQ 6050
24 June 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Tel Aviv Bureau

FROM:

[redacted]
Acting Chief, Monitoring Operations Division

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SUBJECT: Cruising Guidance

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Tel Aviv as a first overseas assignment for new staff cruising officers is looked on as an extension of their training. This was the basis for establishing the position and this is how MOD currently views the assignment for [redacted]. With this in mind, here are MOD's thoughts on what [redacted] should be concentrating on during his tour there. He should:

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1. Thoroughly familiarize himself with bureau's existing cruising files.

This is so he will understand what the bureau has done in the past concerning the radios in its area.

2. Become familiar with the bureau's coverage.

Update broadcast schedule and frequency usage for all radios on coverage. Update schedules with material gathered from cruising observations, broadcast announcements, and current broadcast information printed in various publications. See bureau files for examples.

3. Become familiar with all clandestine broadcasters in the area and verify reception at various times of the broadcast day for each.

Send cruising messages with detailed observations, positive or negative. A clandestine radio does not necessarily follow normal broadcasting patterns; its transmitter may be underpowered, it may operate out-of-band and off frequency, it may drift, it may sign on/off before or after the scheduled time, it usually plays martial/revolutionary music and slogans in between announcements. Strong interference or jamming is commonly noted on the frequency before and during the broadcast.

4. Become familiar with Soviet broadcasts to the area in the major languages and vernaculars.

Get to know the various signature tunes played at the sign on/off

for the International Service, the World Service in English and French, and the Radio Peace and Progress. Learn the characteristics of the international broadcasts of the Soviet republican radios of Baku, Dushanbe, Kiev, Tashkent, Tbilisi, and Yerevan. Participate in the biennial Moscow International and Radio Peace and Progress schedule changes. He may want to begin by reporting only on those programs beamed to the Near and Middle East and North African countries, but once he gets the hang of how the changes work he should expand his reporting to cover all the beams he can hear.

5. Become familiar with the Levant radios of Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, and Greece.

Make an effort to work on Yom Kippur if possible to check these radios when Jerusalem radio is off the air. Pay special attention to the Greek domestic radios; if something happens to Nicosia, Tel Aviv would probably have to cover. Note the Crete transmitters which relay Athens domestic.

6. Become familiar with the North African radios.

These include Malta, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, which are difficult to hear at best, but he should know about them.

7. Become familiar with the Gulf state radios.

These include Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and Oman and North and South Yemen if he can hear them.

8. Become familiar with the television reception in your area.

Especially read the TV files for Israel, Turkey, Cyprus (both Greek and Turkish sectors), Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. Learn what the bureau has done previously, if anything, to gain or improve reception from these possible sources. Terrestrial television reception in the Middle East as well as other places in Europe and Africa is quite different from what it is in the United States --one country's signal on the same channel will interfere with another country's. Therefore, the antenna and directivity is critical. Don't be afraid to experiment widely. He can take his local TV off UHF, and it won't affect experimenting with VHF reception elsewhere.

9. Read in.

Make it a practice to read the editorial clip boards--i.e. service, coverage, admin, and shift log--the first thing after coming on duty. Be attuned to the situation in the bureau's reception area. Be aware of what problems editors are experiencing in their coverage areas and provide them with whatever assistance he can. Never hesitate to report his observations on any radio broadcast, radioteletype transmission, or television transmission within his reception area. Respond to message queries within a reasonable length of time. Answer a routine query within 48 hours. If he can't readily provide an answer and more time is needed to formulate one, he should send an interim response saying so.

10. Become familiar with radioteletype press service transmissions.

These services are gradually disappearing from the shortwave bands as they move to satellite (and FBIS more and more is purchasing the services and having them hardwired into the bureaus) but he should be aware of what services are still available and what their reception is.

In putting the above 10 paragraphs together, we have tried to list them in an order that will best allow Hank to work productively in the bureau and to learn at the same time. If Hank wants to change them around, certainly he should do so. We would suggest, though, that at a minimum he follow the first four in the order given.

We would further suggest, for a long-term related project, that Hank use this paper as a guide in working up a reception survey, using the rooftop antennas, from the bureau's new location. In going through the radios mentioned in this memorandum, he should check reception of all frequencies each radio uses, giving first the reception rating off the bureau's new rooftop antennas and then a comparison rating against the embassy rooftop antennas. We believe bureau files will enable him to make this comparison. He should of course, include a comparison with bureau's remote antennas; always distinguish between rooftop antennas and bureau's remotes when reporting reception.

In general, Hank should use his time learning the broadcast band and becoming familiar with the many languages used. Just randomly spinning through the broadcast band (band prowling) is a great way of doing this. If he doesn't have one already, he should set up a bureau-supplied SW/MW/LW/FM receiver and a recorder at home for use in making ad hoc checks. This will save many drives to the bureau at odd hours.

Finally, we would suggest that Hank limit the data he enters on the IBM-PC to what he uses regularly and that needs periodic updating. It has been MOD's experience in Headquarters that new cruising officers spend too much time keying data entries into the computer. This starts to take on a life of its own and becomes a task that keeps them away from more basic productive work.

One last point is for Hank to adhere closely to the established format for cruising messages. He should avoid ad libbing in messages and simply report his observations fully--answering all questions that come to mind--source, language, GMT time and date of intercept, frequency, parallel frequencies, other frequencies checked, and quality of reception on each. When appropriate, he should indicate whether he plans further observations and reporting. Bureau files contain examples of various types of messages.

We hope this guidance is useful. Please feel free to contact MOD at any time if you or Hank have questions about it or about any other cruising matter.

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